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Carson Congratulates Oklahoma's Early Childhood Education Program

Oklahoma Preschool Program Named National Model

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Washington, D.C. – Eastern Oklahoma Congressman Brad Carson (D-OK) congratulated Governor Brad Henry, State Superintendent Sandy Garrett, and members of the Oklahoma Legislature for the recognition of Oklahoma's universal preschool program as a national model by The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

"This is a great day for Oklahoma," said Congressman Carson. "The outstanding performance of Oklahoma's pre-kindergarten program is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Oklahoma's educators and public servants to the success of all children in our state."

NIEER released its *State of Preschool: 2003 State Preschool Yearbook* today. The *Yearbook*, which evaluates all state-funded preschool programs across the U.S., focusing on access, quality standards, and funding, designated Oklahoma as a national model for state-funded preschool programs. Based on its research, NIEER found that Oklahoma has the highest percentage of four-year-olds attending its pre-kindergarten program and ranks high in quality standards.

Oklahoma is one of only three states nation-wide to be recognized for its state preschool program. The information in *Yearbook* reflects the 2001-2002 year, and found that a majority of other states have too few children enrolled, maintain low quality standards, and provide inadequate funding for preschool programs. In contrast *Yearbook* cites Oklahoma as having an exemplary program.

“Oklahoma’s performance shows an important commitment to providing all children with a solid educational foundation,” continued Carson. “As an Oklahoman I am proud to know that we place such a high value on our future.”